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THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

MARCH 1st, 1863.

THE SANCTUS.

A TALE, BY HOFFMANN.

Translated from the German, by SABILLA NOVELLO.

THE Doctor shook his head doubtfully—"How," cried the Chapel-master, violently jumping off his chair; "Bettina's cold is really of consequence?" The Doctor gently tapped the ground three or four times with his Spanish cane, took out his snuff-box, and put it back into his pocket without taking a pinch, gazed steadily upwards, as though counting the rosettes on the ceiling, and coughed harshly without speaking a word. This sent the Chapel-master distracted, for he knew that this pantomime of the Doctor meant, in audible German words, nothing else than—"a very, very bad case. I don't know what to do or advise, and I veer about in my remedies, like the Doctor in *Gil Blas di Santillana*."

"Well, then, speak out at once," cried the Chapel-master, angrily, "without so many cursed grimaces about a simple hoarseness that Bettina has got, only just by her negligence in not putting on her shawl as she left church. I suppose it will not cost her her life, poor thing?"

"Certainly not," said the Doctor, again taking out his snuff-box, but this time really taking a pinch; "but it is highly probable that she will never sing another note in all her life."

On this, the Chapel-master clutched his hair with both hands, so that the powder showered about, and ran up and down the room like a madman, crying, "Never sing again!—never sing again! Bettina sing no more! Gone all the exquisite canzonets—the wonderful boleros and seguidillas, which streamed from her lips like harmonious flower perfumes! No pious *Agnus*, no consolatory *Benedictus* to be heard from her. Alas! alas! no *Miserere*, which cleansed me from all earthly stain of mundane thoughts—which often inspired me with a whole teeming universe of pure church melodies! Thou liest, Doctor, thou liest; Satan has tempted thee to try me. The cathedral organist, who persecutes me with shameless jealousy ever since I composed an eight-part *Qui tollis*, which enchanted all the world, he has bribed thee! Thou art to throw me into a fit of despair, that I may throw my new mass into the fire; but he shall not succeed, nor thou either. Here—here I have Bettina's solos (he clapped his right hand coat-pocket, which rustled portentously), and the little thing shall immediately sing them with her clear bell voice, more beautifully than ever."

The Chapel-master snatched up his hat, and was rushing off, but the Doctor held him back,

saying softly and kindly, "I honour your worthy enthusiasm, my excellent friend, but I exaggerate nothing, and don't even know the cathedral organist. But thus it is—since the time that Bettina sang the solos of the Gloria and Credo in the catholic church service, she has been seized with a hoarseness, or rather extinction of voice, which baffles my art, and, as I said before, makes me fear she will never sing again."

"Very good," cried the Chapel-master, in a kind of resigned despair, "then give her opium—opium, and for ever opium, till she expires gently by an easy death; for if Bettina may not sing, she shall not live, for she only lives while singing—she exists in song. Beloved Doctor! do me the favor—poison her—the sooner the better. I have great connections among the criminal judges. I studied in Halle with the President; he was a good horn-player, and we every night executed Requiems, with an *ad libitum* accompaniment of dogs and cats. Thou shalt not be arrested on account of the honorable murder. But pray poison her—poison her."

"You are," said the Doctor, interrupting the impetuous Chapel-master, "already somewhat advanced in years; you powder your hair since some time, and yet, as far as music is concerned, you are still *vel quasi* a baby. Don't shout so—don't talk so wildly of murder and death—sit quietly down in that comfortable arm-chair, and hear me patiently."

The Chapel-master cried with doleful tone: "What am I to hear?" but did as he was bid.

"There is," commenced the Doctor, "certainly something unusual and incomprehensible in Bettina's case. She can speak aloud, with the full power of her organ, therefore we cannot detect any common throat-disease; she is even able to produce a musical tone; but, as soon as she would raise her voice in song, something indescribable, which neither declares itself by pricking, tickling, or any other affirmatively maladive symptom, seems to lame her powers, so that every tone exerted, without being precisely out of tune, thick, or catarrhically influenced, dies off weakly and ineffectually. Bettina herself aptly compares her condition to that dreaming state, in which we vainly attempt to soar on high, although convinced of our full power to fly. This negatively sickly condition defies my science, and all remedies remain without effect. The enemy I have to combat, resembles an incorporeal vision, against whom my efforts are in vain. You are right, Chapel-master, in saying that Bettina's whole existence on earth depends upon song (for only singing can we imagine the little bird of Paradise); but precisely because she fancies that her singing, and with it herself, has come to an end, her inward feelings are excited, and I am almost convinced this mental agitation increases her malady, and frustrates my art. She herself says that she is by nature very apprehensive, and therefore, after

months that I have passed (like a drowning man, catching at each splinter) in trying one remedy or another, I believe that Bettina's entire malady is more mental than physical."

"Right, Doctor," here exclaimed the travelling enthusiast,* who, until now, had sat in a corner with his arms folded; "you have hit the right nail on the head at last, my excellent physician. Bettina's morbid symptoms are the physical reflex of mental impression; but are on this account more distressing and incurable. I, I alone can explain everything to you, my dear sirs!"

"What am I to hear?" said the Chapel-master, more dolefully than before.

The Doctor pushed his chair nearer to the travelling enthusiast, and gazed into his face with a curious smiling mien. The travelling enthusiast threw his glance upwards, and without looking at the Doctor or the Chapel-master, spoke—"Chapel-master, I once saw a gay-colored butterfly, which had become imprisoned among the strings of your clavichord. The little thing fluttered carelessly up and down, and moving about its brilliant wings, touched now the upper, now the lower strings, which softly gave out tones and chords, only audible to the sharpest cultivated ear; at last, the tiny creature seemed to swim through the vibrations, as through slowly-rolling waves—or rather, to be carried along by them. But it often happened that a more strongly-touched string rebounded, as in anger, against the gay swimmer's wings, which, sorely bruised, lost their feathery, bright-colored ornament; but, unheeding this, the butterfly flew round and round in the sweet sound, until the strings wounded him more and more sharply, and he lay powerless in the opening of the sounding-board."

"What do you mean?" asked the Chapel-master.

"*Fiat applicator*, my good friend," said the Doctor.

"I did not mean to make any especial application," continued the enthusiast; "but as I really did hear the above-mentioned butterfly play upon the Chapel-master's clavichord, I merely wished to express an idea, which then struck me, and which may serve as precursor to all that I intend to say of Bettina's disease. However, you are at liberty to consider the whole as an allegory, and write it into the album of any travelling artiste. It appeared to me, at that time, that Nature has built all around us a thousand-stringed clavichord, in which we roam about, fancying the tones and chords produced are called forth by our own will, and that we are often mortally wounded, without guessing that an unharmoniously-struck tone has given us our death-blow."

"Very obscure," croaked the Chapel-master.

"Oh!" said the Doctor, laughing; "Oh! have patience, he will soon mount his hobby-horse, and ride off in full gallop to the world of presentiments, dreams, moral influences, sympathies, idiosyncracies, and so forth, until he arrives at the stage of magnetism, when he will stop to breakfast."

"Gently, gently, my wise physician," pleaded the travelling enthusiast; "revile not things which, resist as you may, must be acknowledged humbly, and esteemed highly. Have you not yourself just declared that Bettina's illness is caused by moral excitement, or rather, is merely a moral disease?"

"How comes Bettina," interrupted the Doctor, "to be coupled with the unlucky butterfly?"

"If," continued the enthusiast, "everything must be sifted in a hair-sieve, and every grain be separately investigated and commented upon, we should undertake a work which, tedious in itself, could only produce tedium. Let the butterfly rest in peace within the Chapel-master's clavichord. But confess, Chapel-master, is it not unfortunate that high and holy music should have become an hacknied part of our social existence? The most excelling talent is now dragged down into common dirty life! Formerly, harmony and song descended to us from a sacred distance, as from out an unknown Paradise; but now, everything lies beneath our hand, and we know exactly how many cups of tea a prima-donna drinks, or how many glasses of wine are swallowed by a bass, in order to attain the necessary vein. I well know that societies exist, which, conducted in the true spirit of art, conduce to elevate it; but those miserable, pretentious, coxcombical—but I will not get in a rage. When I arrived here last year, poor Bettina was quite the fashion; she was, as they call it, *recherchée*; people could scarcely drink their tea without the addition of a Spanish romance, an Italian canzonet, or even a French song—'*Souvent l'amour*,' &c., to which Bettina was forced to condescend. I was afraid that the good child, and all her glorious talent, would be drowned in the ocean of tea-water which was thrown over her; this did not happen, but a catastrophe has arrived."

"What catastrophe?" cried Doctor and Chapel-master.

"Look you, my good sirs, the fact is, that Bettina has been, so to speak, enchanted or bewitched, and however disagreeable it may be to me to own it, I, I only am the necromancer who has worked the wicked change, and now, like a neophyte in the black art, am quite unable to break the spell."

"Nonsense, nonsense; and we sit here calmly and let the ironical villain mystify us." Thus cried the Doctor, jumping up.

"But in the d—l's name, the catastrophe—the catastrophe!" urged the Chapel-master.

"Gently, good sirs," said the enthusiast;

* *Translator's Note.*—Hoffmann, in his writings, indicates himself under this assumed character.

"now comes a circumstance, which I can certify, and which, though you may treat my witchcraft as a joke, presses on my conscience, as I fear that unknowingly and unwillingly I may have exerted a mysterious phsycolological power, as a developing and influencing medium, over Bettina; merely acting as conductor, I mean, as the members joined in an electric circle act on each other, without their own will."

"Gee-up—gee-up," ejaculated the Doctor; "see how the hobby-horse prances and curvets."

"But to the story—the story," interrupted the Chapel-master.

"You have already mentioned," continued the enthusiast, "that Bettina, before losing her voice, sang for the last time in the catholic church. Remember that this occurred on the first Easter-holiday of the past year. You had put on your best black coat, and conducted Haydn's excellent Mass in D minor. The trebles consisted of a set of pretty, well-dressed girls, who some of them sang, and some of them didn't; among them stood Bettina, who executed the short solos with her wondrously strong and beautiful voice. You know I had joined the tenors. The *Sanctus* commenced; I felt thrilled by the awe of deep piety. I was disturbed by something rustling behind me; I involuntarily turned round, and to my astonishment beheld Bettina making her way through the vocal and instrumental performers, in order to leave the choir. 'You are going?' I asked. She answered very amiably: 'It is high time for me to go to the * * * Church, where I have promised to take a part in a cantata; and before noon I must rehearse a few duets, that I am to sing at * * *s tea-party; and after that, there is to be a supper at * * *. You will come, I hope; we are to perform some choruses from Handel's *Messiah*, and the first finale from *Nozzi di Figaro*.' During this conversation the full chords of the *Sanctus* rolled out, and incense rose in bluish clouds to the vaulted roof of the cathedral. 'Do you not know,' I said, 'that it is a sin, which will not remain unpunished, to leave church during the *Sanctus*. Perhaps it will be long ere you again sing in a church.' I meant to joke, but I know not how, my words sounded solemn. Bettina turned pale, and left the church in silence; since that moment she has lost her voice."

During this speech the Doctor had resumed his seat, and remained silent, his chin resting on his gold-headed cane; but the Chapel-master exclaimed: "Extraordinary—very extraordinary to be sure."

"To tell the truth," continued the enthusiast, "I really meant nothing by my warning at the moment, and therefore never in the least attributed Bettina's loss of voice to the adventure in the church. It is only now, when I return to this town, and learn from you, my good Doctor, that Bettina is still suffering from her trouble-

some malady, that a story occurs to my mind which I read in some ancient book, and which as it strikes me as being sentimental and effective, I will relate to you."

"Relate away," cried the Chapel-master; "perhaps it may contain stuff for an excellent opera."

"My dear Chapel-master," said the Doctor, "if you can set dreams, presentiments, magnetic conditions, to music, now's your time, for the story will be sure to have something of this kind in it."

Without replying to the Doctor, the enthusiast cleared his throat, and began, with raised voice: "Spread over an immeasurable space, lay the camp of Ferdinand and Isabella before the walls of Granada"—

"Lord of heaven and earth!" interrupted the Doctor, "it begins as though it would not end in nine days and nine nights—and I sit here, while my patients lament. What the deuce do I care for your Moorish stories? I have read 'Gonsalvo di Cordova,' and heard Bettina's seguidillas; that's enough in all conscience, God bless you!"

The Doctor ran out of the room; but the Chapel-master remained sitting tranquilly, saying: "I find it is to be a story about the wars of the Moors and Spaniards; I have long wished to compose something on this subject. Skirmishes—tumult—romances—processions—cymbals—chorales—drums and kettle-drums—ah! kettle-drums. As we are now quietly together, go on, my obliging enthusiast; who knows what seed may be strewn into my mind by your story, and what gigantic blossoms may grow up from it!"

"Now really, Chapel-master," replied the enthusiast, "with you everything resolves itself into an opera, and that is the reason why sensible people, who only partake of music now and then, like a strong dram, sometimes fancy that you are mad. But, nevertheless, I will go on, and you may freely, when the mania seizes you, throw in a few chords."

The author feels obliged, before proceeding to note down the enthusiast's narrative, to beg the reader will kindly permit him, for brevity's sake, to indicate the chords struck by the Chapel-master by the mere title, instead of "said the Chapel-master," &c.

"Spread over an immeasurable space, lay the camp of Ferdinand and Isabella before the walls of Granada. The cowardly Boabdil, called in derision 'the little monarch' by the bitter tongue of his people, waited inactively for aid, and only found consolation in cruel sacrifices to his blood-thirsty hatred. In the same degree that discouragement and despair daily gained ground among the people and army of Granada, the lively hope of victory and desire of glory increased among the Spaniards. Without storming the town, Ferdinand contented himself with

surrounding the walls, and repelling the sallies of the besieged. These small assaults were more like gay tournaments than serious battles, and even the death of those Spaniards who fell in fight only acted as an incentive; for, by the influence of the Church, they were lauded as glorious martyrs to the true Faith. When Isabella joined the camp, she caused a high wooden building to be erected, from the summit of which waved the banner of the Cross. The interior was fitted up as a convent and church, and Benedictine nuns took possession of it, daily performing pious rites. The Queen, accompanied by her suite and knights, came hither every morning to hear mass, which was read by her confessor, and sung by the nuns assembled in the choir. Thus it happened, that Isabella one day was struck by a voice, which overpowered all others by its rare bell-like tone. Its utterance was like the victorious warblings of the nightingale, which, far excelling its melodious companions, remains empress of the woods. And yet the pronunciation of the words was so strange, and the manner of chanting so peculiar and unusual, that a listener was led to suppose that the singer was unpractised in church-style, and perhaps sang the service for the first time. With surprise, Isabella looked around, and remarked that her attendants also seemed seized with astonishment; but, when her eye fell upon the brave knight Aguillar, who was one of her suite, she guessed that some rare adventure must have happened. He knelt in a confessional, his gaze fixed upon the grating of the choir, his dark eyes flowing with rapture and love. When mass was finished, Isabella visited the cell of Donna Maria, the abbess, and enquired concerning the strange singer.

(To be continued.)

Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

BARNARD CASTLE.—The Sacred Harmonic and Choral Society gave their sixth annual concert on Friday, Feb. 6, consisting of selections from Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Haydn's *Creation*, and Mozart's *Twelfth Mass*, for the first part; and secular music for the second part. Principal vocalists: Misses H. Walker, Smith, and Nasbitt; Mr. Whitehead, Signor Delavanti, and Mr. Pearson. Leader of the band, Mr. Singworth, of Newcastle-on-Tyne; organist, Mr. Mortimer; conductor, Mr. Raper. The chorus numbered above 70 voices.

BARNBURY HALL.—The North London Choral Union gave their first concert here on the 3rd ult. Between the parts, the Society presented to Mr. Drage, their conductor, a handsome silver-mounted baton, as a small token of his perseverance in their behalf. The principal soloists were Misses Wiltshire, Western, and Page; Messrs. Page and Carlton.

BATTERSEA.—Mr. John Wilson has been appointed musical director of the Battersea Vocal Association. The rehearsals of sacred and secular music take place every Wednesday evening, in the Lammas Hall.

BINGHAM.—On Tuesday, Feb. 3, a special service was held in the Church, and a collection was made to clear off the debt on the organ. Mr. Irons, organist of Southwell, presided on the occasion. After service, a vocal concert

was given by the choir, and several members of the Southwell choir. Mr. Irons performed two Fantasias on the pianoforte. Conductor, Mr. Hemstock; principal soprano, Miss Hemstock.

BISHOPSTEIGNTON.—On the 13th ult. the members and friends of the Bishopsteignton Choral Society presented their conductor, Mr. Nosworthy, with a handsome testimonial, consisting of a handsome goblet, as a recognition of the efficient services he has rendered them during the time he has filled that office.

BRISTOL.—On Sunday, an organ of good quality, built by Mr. Vowles, was opened in Emanuel Church. Mr. Denning has been appointed organist, and at the opening service his brother, Dr. Albert Denning, presided at the instrument.

CAMBRIDGE.—On February 6th, the Rev. H. Allon, of Islington, delivered a lecture on "Church Song." The illustrations were given by a chorus of fifty voices. On the 11th, Mr. Ingram's benefit concert was given in the Town Hall. The programme included *Alexander's Feast*, Beethoven's Pianoforte Concerts, Op. 75, Mozart's Quartett in G minor, and Beethoven's Violin Sonata in G. The members of the University Musical Society rendered very efficient aid. The solos were sung by Mrs. Bailey, Mr. Machin, and an undergraduate of Sidney College.

CANNON-STREET.—A Singing Class has been formed at the Wesleyan Free Church in Cannon-street Road East.

CARDIFF.—The *Messiah* was performed on the 28th ult., in the Music Hall. The principal singers were Miss Bennett, Miss Harrison, Mr. Righton, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Merrick, and Mr. Greenwood. Mr. Wilkes conducted.

CARMARTHEN.—On Wednesday, Jan. 7, the *Messiah* was given in the Assembly-rooms, under the patronage of the Bishop of St. David's. The band and choir numbered 60 performers, under the direction of Mr. Whitaker, the organist of St. Peter's. The soprano and alto solos were sustained by lady amateurs, whilst Messrs. Turner and Hinchcliffe, from Yorkshire, took the tenor and bass. The proceeds will be applied to repairing the organ in St. Peter's. On Friday, Jan. 30, a musical entertainment was given at the British School-room, Whitemill. Several amateurs from Carmarthen assisted. Mr. Appleby, of St. David's, presided at the harmonium. A concert was given on Thursday, the 19th ult., at the Town Hall, by the members of the Aberystwith Harmonic Society, of whom Mr. J. Powell is the president. The music was the *Messiah*, and the principal singers were Miss Jones and Miss Davies, Messrs. Jones, Phillips, Richards, and James. Mr. Brooke accompanied. The choral performance was decidedly good.

CHOBLTON.—Mr. R. Andrews' concert for the sewing classes in the district took place on the 21st of February, in the Temperance Hall. The performance commenced with the "Dead March" on the harmonium, by Mr. G. S. Andrews, who also played a fantasia on the pianoforte. The programme comprised solos, duets, &c.

CONGLETON.—A miscellaneous Concert was given by Mr. Eyre, in St. Peter's School, on Monday evening, Feb. 9th. The proceeds of the concert, amounting to nearly £20, were given to the funds of the Schools.

CROWLAND, LINCOLNSHIRE.—A concert of miscellaneous music was given here by Mr. E. Harker, organist of the Ancient Abbey, and his choir, assisted by Mr. Thacker, organist to the Duke of Bedford, and part of his choir. Mr. E. Thacker, harmonium, Mr. Thacker, pianoforte.

DUBLIN.—A class for the practice of sacred music, in connection with the Church of England and Ireland Young Men's Society, met for the first time in St. George's Church Lecture-room, on Wednesday, the 11th ult., and are to meet each succeeding Wednesday. Mr. James Lee, of Armagh Cathedral, is the conductor. The Philharmonic Society gave a concert on the 13th ult. The